



## Visio

● John Major

● John Smith

● Paddy Ashdown

JANUARY 11 1993, *The House Magazine*

● John Hume

obvious leadership deficit.

In weather presenters' terms the world political and economic climate could be described as overcast, changeable, stormy with severe conditions in some areas. The hopes of an early post-Cold War spring have been displaced by natural preoccupations and anxieties about recession and its effects in the West, the depth of economic difficulties and geo-ethnic flux in the East which, seemingly intractable in themselves, also conspire to threaten democratic stabilisation.

These issues should not be a source of despair but urgency. They highlight the need for greater international cohesion and the reality of our interdependence. They underline the need to develop and enhance the EC's democratic competence and social and economic purposes. They also beg for an effective realisation of the potential of the CSCE framework.

These two European frameworks can

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**W**e start 1993 formally entering the EC of the Single Market and soon the European Economic Area. The United States is on the threshold of a new presidency from a new generation. The first post-Cold War inauguration is just days away and the

most far-reaching arms reduction treaty has just been signed.

Not so long ago such a configuration of events would have been popularly held to define and determine an agenda for the age yielding a zeitgeist of hope and expectation. That they now fail to do so might reflect a welcome advance from simplistic and ethnocentric assumptions about the nature of world affairs but certainly symptomises the abundant uncertainty which is accentuated by an

## Visions for '93

help to provide certainty in an age when we are increasingly vulnerable to uncertainty. They can variously provide engines for change or anchors for stability as needs require. The neglect of CSCE and the Eurosceptic vandalism against the EC must be faced in 1993.

The use of the vicissitudes of the aftermath of the Cold War and the recession as excuses to undermine European political development must be faced down as an irresponsible betrayal of all our long-term interests. The Government must stop subscribing to uncertainty about our European future by their "now you see it now you don't" belief in a European framework.

The apparent evaporation of "the peace dividend" and ephemeral claims of a "new world order" causes acute disappointment (but hardly surprise) to developing nations. I do not therefore espouse simply a Eurocentric approach to world affairs. MPs should consider their

awareness of and attention to the US-EC differences on GATT and the media coverage of the dispute over rapeseed oil. We should then consider our awareness of an attention to the just and fundamental requirements and entitlements of developing countries for a fair trade environment under GATT.

The appalling suffering of millions in Africa (not just Somalia) and the inadequacy of the official international response, argue not just for new aid and co-operation instruments but the need for a new international economic order.

The collapse of the Eastern bloc was "the death of certainty". Some mistakenly trumpeted it as the end of Socialism. Even a cursory review of the world scene now shows their assumption about global capitalism to be non-starters.

We seem to have gone from false hopes towards fatalistic hopelessness. That is an index of the leadership vacuum. 1993 requires the birth of real purpose.



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